

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 NEA-10 ISO-00 ERDA-05 AID-05

CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 FPC-01 H-01 INR-07

INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04 USIA-06

OES-06 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 FEA-01

/117 W

-----201046Z 022929 /17

R 200836Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7100

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

USMISSION OECD PARIS

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG JA

SUBJ: JAPANESE ENERGY MEETING IN VIENNA

REF: VIENNA 3049 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS CONFIRMED REPORTING FROM VIENNA (REFTEL) ON ENERGY CONFERENCE OF JAPAN'S REPRESENTATIVES IN EUROPE AND MIDDLE EAST. ACCORDING FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCE, CONFERENCE CONCLUDED THAT JAPAN SHOULD SEEK NEW WAYS TO IMPROVE TIES WITH OIL PRODUCING COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY SAUDI ARABIA, AND SHOULD STRONGLY SUPPORT IEA PROGRAMS. JAPANESE OFFICIALS ALSO EXPECT CIEC CAN ACHIEVE PARTIAL SUCCESS. END SUMMARY.

2. RESOURCES DIVISION CHIEF KARITA IN FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS PROVIDED A SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSIONS WHICH TOOK PLACE AT CONFERENCE OF JAPAN'S MISSION REPRESENTATIVES IN VIENNA. KARITA CONFIRMED REPORT IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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REFTEL THAT JAPANESE ARE EXTREMELY INTERESTED IN U.S. ENERGY POLICY STATEMENT AND PROGRAM. THAT PROGRAM IS IMPORTANT FOR TWO REASONS. FIRST, IT COULD REDUCE TOTAL DEMAND FOR OIL, RELIEVING SOME PRESSURE ON JAPAN. SECOND, EFFECTIVE CONSERVATION PROGRAM IN U.S. COULD MAKE IT MUCH EASIER FOR JAPAN TO CARRY OUT SIMILAR PROGRAMS.

3. CONFEREES CONCLUDED THAT SAUDI ARABIA IS GENUINELY SEEKING TO EXPAND OIL EXPORTS AND IS OVERCOMING PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED EARLY THIS YEAR. THEY FEEL THAT JAPANESE EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN TIES WITH SAUDI ARABIA BY CARRYING OUT INCREASED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS WERE LAGGING SERIOUSLY. THEY URGED TOKYO OFFICIALS TO DO MORE BUT WERE INFORMED THAT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COSTS HAVE RISEN AND ARE IMPEDING PERFORMANCE.

4. JAPANESE REPS FROM TEHRAN SAID THAT BEST-SELLING NOVEL "CRASH OF '79" WAS CREATING A PROBLEM FOR THEM BECAUSE PRACTICALLY ALL RECENT JAPANESE VISITORS TO IRAN HAVE READ AND BEEN INFLUENCED BY IT. THEY SAID THAT TOO MANY ACCEPT THE AUTHOR'S IMPLICATION THAT IRAN IS HAWKISH ON OIL AND SAUDI ARABIA IS DOVISH. IT TAKES SOME TIME FOR THEM TO CONVINCE VISITORS TO IRAN THAT THIS IS A FALSE AND DANGEROUS OVERSIMPLIFICATION.

5. THE CONFEREES ANTICIPATE THAT THE TWO-TIER PRICE SYSTEM WILL SURVIVE FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE AND POSSIBLY LONGER BUT EVENTUALLY EXPECT OPEC TO MOVE BACK TO A "SINGLE PRICE" SYSTEM.

6. THEY DISCUSSED PROSPECTS FOR A MAJOR OFFSHORE CRUDE TRANSIT STATION (CTS) IN MICRONESIA, INDONESIA OR POSSIBLY THAILAND. KARITA SAID THE CONFEREES ARE DOUBTFUL ABOUT THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF A CTS AND THAT THE GOJ HAS TAKEN NO POSITION BECAUSE OF DELICATE POLITICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS. ALSO, THE GOJ DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT OIL STORED IN AN OFFSHORE CTS COULD BE COUNTED AS PART OF JAPAN'S EMERGENCY RESERVES.

7. THE CONFEREES DISCUSSED THE CIEC AND ITS FINAL MINISTERIAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MEETING. THEY EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN FINDING SOME WAY TO CONTINUE A DIALOGUE ON ENERGY WITH LDCS AFTER THE MINISTERIAL, WHICH THEY FELT WOULD BE A PARTIAL BUT NOT A COMPLETE SUCCESS.

8. JAPANESE OFFICIALS ENDORSED THE USEFULNESS OF THE IEA AND FELT THAT CONFRONTATION BETWEEN IEA AND OPEC IS NOW LESS OF AN ISSUE. THEY DISCUSSED A POSSIBLE IEA/OPEC DIALOGUE, NOT IN THE SHORT TERM, BUT AT SOME FUTURE TIME, POSSIBLY BETWEEN ORGANIZATION SECRETARIATS. AS NOTED IN REFTEL, THEY WERE CONCERNED ABOUT THE CONTINUED USG COMMITMENT TO THE IEA. WITHOUT PROMPTING, KARITA CONFIRMED JAPANESE FEELING REPORTED IN VIENNA REFTEL THAT U.S. INTEREST IN IEA SEEMS TO BE FLAGGING.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ENERGY, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
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Sent Date: 20-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977TOKYO05744
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770136-1232
Format: TEL
From: TOKYO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770436/aaaabeyu.tel
Line Count: 110
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 3601b1a1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 VIENNA 3049
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2743778
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: JAPANESE ENERGY MEETING IN VIENNA
TAGS: ENRG, OCON, JA
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3601b1a1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009